

School Food Summit

Improving Student Nutrition
in San Diego County

Results of Strategy Development Sessions

March 9, 2005

Table of Contents

	Page
School Food Summit Sponsors	3
Introduction	4
<u>Strategy Development Sessions</u>	
Session 1: School's Out	5
Session 2: What's for Lunch? – Besides School Lunch	7
Session 3: Classroom Fun and Rewards	9
Session 4: Creative Fundraising	13
Session 5: My Lunch Box	14
Session 6: Para la Familia, en Español (For the Family)	17

Summit Sponsors

The 2005 School Food Summit would not have been possible without the generous support of sponsors. Their contributions not only covered all costs associated with hosting this major event, but also allowed the event to happen without any cost to those who attended. Consequently, school and district representatives who otherwise may not have been able to attend the summit were able to attend, learn, and contribute to the development of strategies to improve the school nutrition environments of the students they serve.

County of San Diego and Chairwoman Pam Slater-Price

Coalition on Children and Weight San Diego

HealthLink North County

Palomar Pomerado Health

Buena Vista Food Products, Inc.

Hollandia Dairy

Health Net

Maisano Produce Distributors

Super Snax

Little Ceasar's Pizza

County of San Diego Health and Human Services Agency,
Public Health Services, Maternal, Child, and Family Health Services

North County Health and Human Services Agency

Introduction

In an effort to reduce the prevalence of overweight children in San Diego County, the Coalition on Children and Weight San Diego and HealthLink North County joined forces to plan the countywide **2005 School Food Summit**. School and district policy makers, food service directors, school health professionals, teachers, parents, and student leaders were invited to learn about the issue and to take action. State and local experts presented information on the effects of poor nutrition on school performance and the risk of developing chronic diseases; legislation impacting schools; and best practices to combat the issue. (School Food Summit PowerPoint presentations are available at the Coalition on Children and Weight San Diego website: www.ccwsd.net) Then participants attended one of the sessions described below and discussed strategies to promote good nutrition in the school environment.

Session 1: School's Out: before and after school programs

Session 2: What's for Lunch? – Besides School Lunch: competitive and a la carte foods and beverages

Session 3: Classroom Fun and Rewards: healthful eating in the classroom

Session 4: Creative Fundraising: remembering health while raising money

Session 5: My Lunchbox: bringing healthful foods from home

Session 6: Para la Familia, En Español: los servicios de nutrición de la escuela
(For the Family: school food services and nutrition)

If you have questions or would like additional information, resources, or assistance, please visit the Coalition on Children and Weight San Diego website at www.ccwsd.net or call 619-542-4041.

Session 1: School's Out

Tia Quinn, Guest Presenter

After School Program Coordinator, San Diego County Office of Education

Wendy Werner, Facilitator

6 to 6 Program, City of San Diego

Session Description

Participants in this session addressed the issue of creating before and after school programs that promote healthful eating and physical activity. Various barriers and potential solutions were discussed.

Barriers

- Lack of funding for
 - Snacks (especially healthful snacks)
 - Programs
 - Park safety
- Lack of time / so many program requirements already
- Lack of effective training of staff
- Lack of education / training for classroom teachers on ways to incorporate information on healthy lifestyles into the core curriculum
- High turnover rate of staff
- Need for volunteer involvement
- Need for bilingual trainers / facilitators
- Lack of credentialed physical educators in the schools
- Need for fitness standards in after school programs
- Lack of on-site facilities, such as kitchens, gardens
- Lack of appropriate safe and supervised indoor and outdoor facilities
- Hard to establish / implement activities, because youth come in and out of the programs
- Hard to appeal to kids / kids seem to prefer “unhealthy” foods
- No parent support
- Parent and community education is lacking
- Need community support i.e., from Chamber of Commerce, Business, Media, Transportation, Health Specialties, PTA / PTO

Ideas for Action

- ✓ Advocate to city or state officials for funds for after school programs.
- ✓ Engage in grant writing, and create awareness of need for funding.
- ✓ Train staff to engage in healthful behaviors and activities.
- ✓ Provide more communication and coordination between schools and program staff to create common goals.
- ✓ Build relationships with schools. (i.e., We will use your kitchen and clean it!)
- ✓ Establish gardens in after school programs to encourage kids to eat healthfully.
- ✓ Use patience and ingenuity☺!
- ✓ Think positive.
- ✓ Provide parent education on healthful eating and grocery shopping.
- ✓ Promote parent involvement and support.
- ✓ Encourage parents to maintain a regular schedule for their children's attendance of after school programs to facilitate program planning and implementation.
- ✓ Establish partnerships with the community / local agencies / the media.
- ✓ Create partnerships with local colleges / high schools.
 - o Service clubs
 - o School community service component

Session 2: What's for Lunch? – Besides School Lunch

Pam McCoy, Guest Presenter

Director of Child Nutrition Services, San Marcos Unified School District

Robin Pelletier, Facilitator

Program Coordinator, Nutrition Network News

Session Description

During this session, participants discussed strategies to provide students with access to healthful food choices on campus, with special emphasis on the competitive and a la carte foods that may compete with school breakfast and lunch programs. Various problems were identified, and solutions were suggested.

Problem 1. Candy Sales by Student Sport or Other School Organizations

Solutions:

- Change organizations' fundraising efforts.
 - o Ask the supplier to remove all food items from the catalog.
 - o Only sell water or other healthful drinks.
 - o Conduct a pledge type of event – i.e., read so many books, have a relay race, etc.
 - o Conduct a magazine drive.
- Gain the support of the school board, superintendent, and principal.
 - o Ensure that policy development and enforcement occurs.

Problem 2. Competitive Food Sales (i.e., Student Store)

Solutions:

General

- Limit hours and days of operation.
- Feature a special event for the day and time when entity is open for business.
- Do not sell food items.

A La Carte Sales

- Limit portion sizes of the items.
- Support Senate Bill 12 (Escutia), which includes the following:
 - o Separate regulations for the "snack" foods
 - o Includes K-12
 - o Governor supports
- Poway Unified has adopted SB 12 standards before being required to by law!

Other

- Build public relations.
- Solicit sponsorship of school and student organizations from the community (i.e., Rotary Club, AVID program, Kiwanis, etc.).
- Acquire grant money to assist with program expenses.
 - o WalMart, Dr. Seuss Foundation, etc.
- Be creative with solutions.
- Enforce the California Education Code within districts and schools.

Problem 3. Removal of a la Carte Lines?

Solutions:

- Modify point of sale so students can be fed in 30 minutes or less.
- Increase the length of lunch periods.
- Limit the number of food and beverage options on the lines.
- MARKET healthful foods.
 - o Presentation of items must be attractive.

Problem 4. Classroom Practices

Solutions:

- Teachers should be role models.
- Do not allow food rewards.

Problem 5. At Home

Solutions:

- Educate parents about healthful fast food options.
 - o Include fruit and vegetable “sides” with combo meals.

Session 3: Classroom Fun & Rewards

Howard Taras, M.D., Guest Presenter

Community Pediatrics, University of California San Diego

Kristin Mueller, Facilitator

Program Coordinator, 5-a-Day Power Play! Campaign

Session Description

At this session, various topics were discussed related to modeling and reinforcing healthful eating in the classroom. The focus was to develop specific strategies for implementing change, including policy development. Discussion topics included providing alternative rewards, developing healthful snack policies, providing nutrition and physical education curricula, banning soda, and promoting fruit and vegetable consumption.

Three case scenarios were presented to participants. The overall themes that emerged from discussions of the three cases are provided below, and further details of those discussions can be found on the next three pages.

Overall Themes

1. Raise awareness.
 - a. Educate students and parents.
 - i. Incorporate nutrition and physical education curricula.
2. Get the school community involved (parents, teachers, staff, principals, school board, PTA, students, etc.).
 - a. Get buy-in, agreement, and participation.
 - b. Model healthful behavior.
 - c. Promote advocacy.
3. Develop policies, such as the following:
 - a. Healthy Snack Policy
 - i. Provide guidelines for allowable foods and beverages that can be brought into the classroom for snacks, parties, events, etc.
 - b. Reward Policy
 - i. Prohibit food as a reward.
 - ii. Provide guidelines / regulations on foods that can be used as rewards.
 - c. Policy to prohibit bringing outside food onto the school grounds
 - d. Policy to ban soda in high schools

CASE #1

A fourth grade class is going on a field trip that requires parent permission. The teacher wants the children to bring permission slips from their parents. She tells the students that when all permission slips are in (whether or not they indicate a child is allowed to go), she will provide an ice cream party.

1. What are the issues here?
 - a. Using food as a reward builds bad habits.
 - b. Low nutrient density foods are especially bad to use as rewards.
 - c. Teachers unthinkingly reward with food and don't consider the effects.
 - d. Children with special diets or food allergies (e.g., lactose intolerance) may feel left out, which creates unnecessary diversity in the class.
 - e. Food attracts pests (e.g., cockroaches, rats) in the classroom.
 - f. There is a lack of consistency within school or district.
 - i. Some teachers reward with food, while others don't.
 - g. Teachers should be role models for children.
2. What would be a better idea?
 - a. Don't reward at all.
 - b. Don't reward unnecessarily.
 - i. In this case, the field trip would be enough of a reward.
 - c. Use non-food alternative rewards.
 - i. For example, use physical activity breaks, token reward system, prize box, out of homework pass, sit with principal at lunch, walk with principal, recognition, praise, read-in, mad science assembly.
 - ii. For more ideas, visit the following websites:
www.cspinet.org/nutritionpolicy/constructiverewards.pdf
www.tn.fcs.msue.msu.edu/foodrewards.pdf
www.state.ct.us/sde/deps/Student/NutritionEd/Food As Reward H01.pdf
 - d. Communicate with parents (e.g., via email).
3. Can you suggest any policies that could prevent this?
 - a. Establish a "no food as reward" policy.
 - b. Provide guidelines for non-food alternative rewards.
 - c. Use school lunch regulations as guidelines for foods that may be used as rewards or for celebrations.
4. If you think a policy is a good idea, should the policy be at the school, district, or state level?
 - a. School policy: It would provide consistency across teachers.
 - b. District policy: Lemon Grove School District passed a "No food as reward policy."
 - c. State policy: Incorporate as part of the state-mandated "Local Wellness Policy (2006)."
5. How would you get that policy going?
 - a. Start at the district level, and then go into the schools.

CASE #2

In a first grade class, children from multiple ethnic groups (from across USA, Asia, Africa, and Latin America) bring in many different sorts of snacks. The Physical Education Specialist who advises the teacher on physical activity notices that although some children have fruit and low-sugar carbohydrate foods (like apples and corn tortillas), most have sweet and/or high-fat snacks. The principal advises the Physical Education Specialist that these and other snacks have cultural origins and that the school should not be interfering with these customs.

1. What are the issues here?
 - a. Teacher is not taking responsibility to inform/educate about the nutritional value of foods.
 - b. Food-borne illness could result from bringing unsafe food from outside the school.
 - i. This refers to a broader context of sharing food brought from outside the school (e.g., class parties, bake sales, fairs).
 - ii. A death occurred in the South Bay District as a result of food-borne illness from food brought from outside the school.
2. What would be a better idea?
 - a. Take advantage of the educational opportunity to inform/educate about the nutritional value of foods.
 - b. Teachers can provide alternative snacks.
 - i. The Head Start program provides snacks from culturally diverse recipe books, which are distributed to parents as well as to teachers.
 - c. Share other multi-cultural information besides food (e.g., about people and traditions).
3. Can you suggest any policies that could prevent this?
 - a. Do not allow outside food for sharing.
 - b. Create a healthful snack policy.
 - i. Create guidelines for food brought for snacks, parties, etc.
 - ii. Work with students and parents to get agreement and participation.
 - iii. For a sample policy, visit www.dole5aday.com/pdf_global/SettingaHealthySnackPolicy.pdf
4. If you think a policy is a good idea, should the policy be at the school, district, or state level?
 - a. School
 - b. District
 - i. Lemon Grove School District passed a "healthy snack policy."
 - ii. South Bay District has policy that does not allow sharing of food brought in from outside the school.
 - c. State

CASE #3

A high school nurse is concerned about the soft drinks that kids bring from home and buy from the vending machines at school. A large number of these youth are obese and/or have cavities. She suggests to the principal that there be a no-soft drink policy at school. Students complain, and one parent calls the nurse to say that his daughter only drinks diet soft drinks, and that it is all right with him.

1. What are the issues here?
 - a. Dental issues:
 - i. Regular sodas contain high levels of sugar that can cause dental carries.
 - ii. Diet sodas contain sugar alternatives that cause tooth enamel degradation.
 - b. Obesity issues: There is a correlation between high intake of soft drinks and obesity.
 - c. There is a lack of health classes to educate youth about nutrition.
 - d. Schools have lucrative contracts with soda companies.
2. What could be a next step?
 - a. Oceanside provides bottles of water at a lower price than sodas and has seen an increase in water consumption and a decrease in soda consumption.
 - b. Create School Health Councils.
 - c. Engage in a trial and error process to make gradual changes.
3. Can you suggest any policies that could prevent this?
 - a. Soda ban policy
4. If you think a policy is a good idea, should the policy be at the school, district, or state level?
 - a. School
 - i. There are models for environmental change, which each school can modify for its unique situation.
 - b. District
 - c. State
 - i. Senate Bill 965 (Escutia), currently at state level, would eliminate the sale of soda and other highly sweetened beverages on high school campuses.

Session 4: Creative Fundraising

Enid Hohn, Guest Presenter

Food Services Director, Vista Unified School District

Mary Blackman, Facilitator

Health and Physical Education Coordinator, San Diego County Office of Education

Session Description

In today's school environment where there are long lists of needs and short lists of funds, it seems like everyone has turned to fund raising to fill the gap. The easiest fund raising appears to be selling food: candy bars, cookie dough, pizzas, muffin dough, nachos, even Krispy Kreme doughnuts. No one disagrees with the reasons for raising money, but with today's increasing rates of childhood obesity and type two diabetes, new methods are needed. In discussing win-win partnerships with school sites to raise money and restore nutrition integrity, the following strategies were suggested:

- When developing policies, include stakeholders, such as the parent organization, director of food services, teachers, administrators, and students.

Recommendation: Conduct focus groups to develop policy. Include both fitness and nutrition goals.

- Policy changes should occur incrementally. For example, start by limiting a campus junk food fund-raiser to one time a year, and approve once a month sales of healthful items. (Note: Lemon Grove District currently has this policy.)
- Encourage an "Operation Healthy Kids" program, which would allow a donation to the fund-raiser without buying a product (similar to the Girl Scouts Operation Thin Mint).
- Team with fruit growers in the area for products to sell. (Fallbrook does this now with avocado growers.)
- Engage your community in fund-raising decisions. Contact contractors the district uses, and ask for their support.

Session 5: My Lunch Box

Dr. Christine Wood, Guest Presenter
Pediatrician and Author, San Diego

Amy Haessly, Facilitator
Youth Nutrition Educator, University of California Cooperative Extension

Session Description

The focus of this session was to develop strategies that encourage and promote students of all ages to bring healthful foods from home, including lunch, snacks, and treats. The following questions were discussed:

How do you communicate to a parent that food choices are affecting the student's behavior?

Participants observed that students with behavior issues (i.e., unfocused, agitated) frequently bring poor food choices to school.

Parent education is a critical means of communicating with parents. Offering nutrition education classes (in English and Spanish) can increase their awareness of the effects foods have on their children. It is best to offer several weeks of classes and include cooking demonstrations. The PTA or clinics, such as North County Health Services, can sponsor classes. Encourage parents to keep a food diary of what their children eat.

Who can educate parents?

- WIC (Women, Infants, & Children), a program for families with children under five years old
- Coalition on Children and Weight San Diego
- First Five program (Latino, African American, and regional groups)
- Hospital Dietitians
- Pediatricians
- Family Resource Centers (i.e., Chula Vista)
- School Nurses
- University of California Cooperative Extension Family Nutrition Program
- Health Net of California

How can we educate parents?

- Develop a Wellness Policy that includes parent education.
- Create a Speakers Bureau of people who can teach free nutrition classes at schools.
- Use the “*promotora* model” (community residents trained to be health educators).
- Designate a “Nutrition Education Champion” who promotes nutrition at school.
- Educate parents by identifying the health effects of being overweight.
- Educate about healthful treats that can be brought to classrooms.
- Teach balance and moderation.
- Share recipes of cultural foods prepared in healthful ways (i.e., no lard).
- Offer cooking classes and hands-on learning activities for parents.
- Be culturally sensitive. Parents may be resistant to nutrition information that is contrary to cultural traditions.
- Be sensitive to the fact that parents may think it’s difficult to offer and enjoy healthful foods as a family, when both parents work and children stay in day care all day.
- Include “Wellness Tips” on school menus that are sent home.
- Send out newsletters with recipes, wellness and nutrition tips, and information emphasizing the importance of routine wellness checkups for children.
- Organize health fairs at schools. Have health fairs sponsored by vendors or health insurance companies; use as fund-raisers; hold fairs during lunch breaks; utilize health fairs to educate parents; involve students in creating health fairs.
- Start using health messages with young children to change their thinking; it will follow them into high school; empower kids to bring the message home.
- Start with small steps.
- Encourage parents to have their children take advantage of school lunches.
- Contact local health plans for support and resources.
- Provide information at the schools about health insurance coverage.

Remember that an overweight child may have underlying health problems affecting his/her weight. Encourage parents to take their child to the doctor for regular wellness check-ups, as well as when they are concerned about the child’s health. If the doctor says the child is fine and you have a concern, voice your concerns to the pediatrician.

Some parents believe that if the child is not overweight, the child is not healthy. We need to re-educate parents to inform them about healthful weights for growing children.

How can we reach the parents of older students in the secondary grades?

- Mimic the tobacco industry efforts to change behavior.
- Make healthful eating seem “cool.”
- Bring in the private sector to promote good nutrition.
- Invite chefs into the classroom.
- Involve the faith communities to reach out to the parents who aren’t involved on campus.

How can we get support from the school administration?

- Develop a sample policy; take it to the school board; provide background information / education (contact Coalition on Children and Weight San Diego for assistance: www.ccwsd.net or call 619-542-4041); and encourage them to adopt the policy.
- Focus on foods and beverages sold on campus.
- Create a policy to prohibit soda, to limit access to unhealthy food and beverage choices, and to eliminate use of food as a classroom reward.
- Ask your principal to enforce a “No Candy Rule.” This may assist and encourage parents in modifying their home policies to encourage more healthful eating.
- Create a policy to support nutrition education for families.
- Provide access to a Speaker’s Bureau.
- Support a national advertising campaign to promote healthful eating.
- Hold fund-raisers at restaurants that offer healthful options. Encourage families to develop healthful habits.

How can we control the foods that are traded at lunch?

- Educate students, parents, and teachers that trading food may not be safe (i.e., trading germs, potential for food allergies).
- Create a lunchtime culture that discourages trading.
- Ask teachers eat their lunches with the students.

Successes shared during session:

The North Central Public Health Center has collaborated with Mission Bay High School to create a dance program for students that includes nutrition education.

Create partnerships like the School Health Innovative Plans, which is a collaboration between schools and health care/plans to link students with affordable health care.

Session 6: Para la Familia, En Español

Maria Chaves, Guest Presenter

Migrant Education Region IX, San Diego County Office of Education

J. Tony Lopez, Guest Presenter

*Area Supervisor, Child Nutrition Services/Secondary Schools,
San Marcos Unified School District*

Adriana Paulson, Facilitator

*Migrant Health & Support Services Specialist, Migrant Education Program, Region IX,
San Diego County Office of Education*

Descripcion de la Sesion

Session Description

En esta sesión tendremos oportunidad de hacer preguntas a cerca de los servicios de nutrición de la escuela y aclarar otras dudas sobre nutrición.

During this session we will have the opportunity to ask questions about school food services and other nutrition issues.

Las siguientes sugerencias fueron dadas por los padres que participaron en esta session.

The following suggestions were made by parents participating in this session.

- **Informar y educar a los padres.**

Provide better education and information to parents.

- **Mejorar y aumentar la comunicacion entre el distrito escolar y las agencias de la comunidad que proveen entrenamiento y recursos.**

Increase communications between the school district and community agencies that provide training and resources.

- **Aumentar el numero de horas y las participacion de los padres. Los padres escuchan a otros padres, seria positivo que se entrene a un grupo de padres lideres para que informen y entrenen a otros padres en este tema.**

Increase volunteer participation and commitment from parents. Because parents often listen to other parents, develop a cadre of parent volunteers to provide training and information to other parents.

- **Planear grupos de analisis con maestros, padres y estudiantes para intercambiar ideas teniendo en cuenta las areas geograficas, la demografia y las necesidades del grupo.**

Plan focus groups for teachers, parents, and students to address the issues that affect their particular needs and demographics.

- **Los padres deben educar con el ejemplo y modelar el comportamiento a sus hijos. Los padres deben decidir que es lo que se compra en el Mercado y que es lo que los ninos comen y llevan a la escuela en la lonchera. Se debe comenzar por controlar las porciones, comer mas frutas, verduras y productos integrales (frijoles, arroz integral, harina integral, etc). Se debe reducir el uso de grasa (manteca, mantequilla, aceites, etc) y hacer mas actividad fisica.**

Parents should practice healthful habits in order to be role models for their children. Parents should decide which foods and beverages they purchase at the market and the items they send in the lunchbox. A good way to start making changes is to control portion sizes; eat plenty of fruits, vegetables, and whole grained foods (cornmeal, beans, whole wheat, brown rice, etc.); decrease the amount of fat (lard, butter, margarine, oil, etc.) used; and get more physical activity.